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Chance of storms, High 68, Low 64

TAKING GUN STORES BY STORM

109 firearms were stolen during Harvey. How the ATF tried to track them down

By St. John
Barned-Smith
and Alain Stephens

A Glock 23 pistol. A .40-caliber Springfield XDM-40. A Ruger P95. Dozens of other handguns, shotguns and long rifles: all missing.

As Hurricane Harvey inundated Houston, most

people were just trying to stay safe. Police officers were busy saving lives.

Across the city, however, crews of enterprising thieves used the disaster to break into gun stores and carry away 109 firearms — untraceable and easily sold.

Investigators from the Houston office of the Bu-

reau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives have so far recovered a half dozen of the weapons. Where are the rest?

That's what Ryan Taylor wants to know. He oversees the agents tasked with hunting down the stolen weapons.

One thing is certain, he says: They're crime guns now, and they're not being used for good.

GUN
HUNTERS

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It was Sunday morning, Aug. 27, and much of Houston was underwater. At his home in Kingwood, Rob Elder sat at his kitchen table, wondering how high the water in his street would rise. Then the phone rang. Looters had broken into a Cash America pawn shop in the

ATF continues on A16

By the numbers

109: Firearms stolen from gun stores during Hurricane Harvey.

6: Weapons stolen during Harvey and recovered by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

650: Gun dealers in the Houston region.

150: Firearms stolen in the Houston region during Hurricane Ike.

DACA fix not likely in 2017

Democrats look to attach issue to budget legislation

By Bill Lambrecht

WASHINGTON — Democrats in Congress are growing increasingly pessimistic that an agreement to protect young immigrants from deportation can be reached this year.

While U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar, D-Laredo, says it would take a miracle to get a deal done before lawmakers leave for the holidays later this week, immigration advocates are holding out hope that an agreement can be reached in the Senate by tying the fix to the must-pass budget bill, which could force action in the House.

The nearly 800,000 so-called "Dreamers" in jeopardy since the Trump administration canceled the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program have pressed for resolution before the end of the year. President Donald Trump gave Congress until early March to write legislation restoring protections, a date GOP leaders in Congress see as affording sufficient time for a solution.

"You have an unfolding crisis in which young American kids are losing jobs and being exposed to deportation, and Republican leadership is saying we can kick the can down the road," said Frank Sharry, executive director of America's Voice, an immigrant advocacy group.

An average of 122 DACA recipients lose protections like work permits daily because their renewal applications weren't received by Oct. 5, the deadline the administration prescribed, advocates said. And waiting until 2018 could bring more problems because of election-year pressures, they say.

Cesar Espinosa, executive director of the immigrant rights organization FIEL Houston, said that he has seen congressional support dwindling as the year winds down — even

Democrats continues on A16

All eyes on the holiday lanterns, lights



Melissa Phillip / Houston Chronicle

A family checks out Magical Winter Nights, a lantern festival and holiday celebration, on Sunday at Gulf Greyhound Park in La Marque. The event also includes a carnival and Chinese acrobatic performances and runs through Jan. 2.

Putin calls Trump, thanks him for CIA tip

Intel leads to detainment of group that confessed to terror attack plot

By David Filipov
WASHINGTON POST

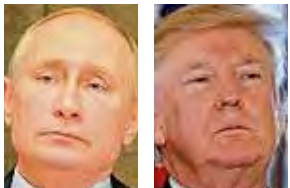
MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday called President Donald Trump to thank him for a tip from the CIA that thwarted a terrorist attack being planned in St. Petersburg.

The unusual call — countries share intelligence all the time, but presidents rarely publicly thank one another for it — was confirmed by White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

Putin told Trump that the information provided by the CIA allowed Rus-

sian law enforcement agencies to track down and detain a group of suspects who were planning to bomb the centrally located Kazan Cathedral and other crowded parts of Russia's second-largest city.

"Based on the information the United States provided, Russian authorities were able to capture the terrorists just prior to an attack that could have killed large num-



Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump spoke after suspects' capture.

bers of people," the White House said in its readout of the call. "Both leaders agreed that this serves as

an example of the positive things that can occur when our countries work together."

It was the two presidents' second conversation since Thursday, when they spoke after Putin's annual four-hour televised news conference, during which the Russian leader mentioned the booming U.S. stock market as an example of Trump's suc-

Terrorist continues on A15

Lunar rover has drill, will seek water to enable deep-space travel

NASA project to launch vehicle to the moon may get boost from Trump administration, allow manned mission to Mars

By Alex Stuckey

Even as President Donald Trump signed a directive last Monday to put boots back on the moon, a team of NASA researchers continued work on a quiet project to send an unmanned rover there.

The project started three years ago, when several NASA centers, including Johnson Space Center, em-

"I think there's always been interest in the moon, going back thousands of years. So if this mission gets into flight, we'll be very excited."

Bill Bluethmann, NASA engineer

barked on a quest to learn more about availability of water on the moon. If there is enough water that can

be collected easily, the elements could be broken down to create rocket fuel, for example, or astronaut life support.

The result of their efforts, thus far, is Resource Prospector: a 6-square-foot rover outfitted with a drill and mini science lab built to find and process water on the moon.

"Our mission is about

Rover continues on A15



Bill Bluethmann, a NASA robotics engineer at Johnson Space Center, talks about the Resource Prospector rover, designed to drill into the moon's crust in search of water.

Brett Coomer / Houston Chronicle